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The 322nd Field Artillery at the Front During September and October 1918

Templeton Briggs

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Personal experience at the front

THE 322ND FIELD ARTILLERY AT THE FRONT

DURING SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER 1918

By

1st LIEUTENANT TEMPLETON BRIGGS,
Artillery Intelligence Officer.
322nd F.A.

If you have never read this
account by Tempe Briggs, it
should be of interest to
you.

A.B.W.

stamp

LES ALLIEUX FME. and DEATH VALLEY

September 19, 1918:

At 7:00 P. M. the 1st section of the 322nd F. A. Light, left COETQUIDAN for the front. The Regiment is getting very proficient in the art of entraining and everything passed off very pleasantly.

September 20, 1918:

The whole has been spent in clearing elements of the Regiment from GUER, the nearest R. R. station to this camp. No untoward incidents have marred this day, which marks the end of a year of training and the beginning of the real thing. The men are in great form and the "esprit de Corps spirit" is running high. The Colonel invited me to ride down the GUER with him in the Dodge to watch the entraining.

September 21, 1918:

The 8th, and last Section, left the middle of the morning. After that the Colonel made a careful inspection of the whole Regimental area, which proved to be in excellent condition, and then we climbed into the Dodge, bound for the Front. We have only come as far as Rennes today, as we can make PARIS tomorrow night. The Colonel is passing the night with some friends, Capt. Noyes and I are at the Hotel de France, and Staton, the driver, is put up at troop quarters. In addition to the personnel, we have in the car: the Colonel's bedding roll, suitcases and bag, Capt. Noyes' and my bags and gas mask and a steel helmet apiece, various masettes, Staton's blanket roll, boxes of lunch and other odds and ends. The Dodge's sides are positively bulging.

September 22, 1918:

"So this is Paris" - We are now "billeted" in the Continental Hotel, Paris, France. The trip from RENNES was somewhat disagreeable as it drizzled continuously, and we finished the trip in a blaze of punctures. But we had the pleasure of stopping at 83d Division Headquarters, in LES MANS, where the Colonel had a chat with General Glenn and I saw "Johnny Mitch" and Dudley Sutphin. The Colonel drove part of the way. The roads were very slmy and we yawed so much it made me think of my old knackabout. Out last three punctures occurred between VERSAILLES and PARIS, so by the time we had found a garage for Staton and secured our rooms, it was too late to see the sights. But the Colonel says we will stay over tomorrow, so all is well.

September 23, 1918:

This has been a very pleasant day, althomI Can't say we have accomplished much. The morning was spent in seeing a bit of PARIS, largely through the medium of hunting a certain kind of pipe for the Colonel. Several times we tried to go back to the hotel, with the net result of landing in the same square again.

We had a really truly American cocktail before lunch, which occurred at the Cafe de la Paix, and consisted of all the things - including lobster, which we shall not see for some time to come.

This afternoon we did some more shopping and the Colonel and I got measured for uniforms at Hill Bros. for Fcs. 500 we are to get uniforms

which are almost as good as those from the Q. M. for Fcs. 150. But why go to Paris if not to be extravagant.

We had dinner at the hotel so that we might tear into the Casino early, the result being that the place was like a morgue when we arrived. The show finally started and proved to be one to which any Sunday School teacher could take his class. I began to fear our efforts to show the Colonel the gay life were a flat failure, but during the intermission I had to fight the coquettes away from him and Captain Noyes had the pleasure of showing that he was above Temptation. The Colonel directed our steps homeward as soon as the show was over and tomorrow morning we make an early start in the general direction of the Western Front.

September 24, 1918:

Today has been a weird one. Of course our seven o'clock start took place at about eight - a condition far from acceptable to the Colonel. But the sun was shining and the roads were good so everyone was in a fine humor, and we settled down to enjoy the trip. All went well until we reached BAR-LE-DUC, where we fondly expected to find the 32nd Division, to which we are now supposed to be attached. After driving around the town three times we were forced to the conclusion that the 32nd was not concealed therein. We finally got a clue as to Army Artillery H. Q. and proceeded to SOUILLY, where I met Reg. Foster. By this time it was pitch dark and the chase had become exciting. We were obliged to drive without any lights and all roads looked alike to us in their total unfamiliarity. Horns were taboo, apparently because of their customary use as gas alarms and often the only warning would be the shrilling of a whistle. Then would follow a quick swerve, and on we would go. The big trucks were the worst, for altho we could hear them in plenty of time, they could scarcely hear us and then too they cannot turn out much without getting ditched. I am already beginning to realize that this night driving without lights is one of the real horrors of war.

Finally we found the staff of the 158th. F. A. Brigade and our troubles ended temporarily. We are turning in a little after midnight in a battered house in the village of VRAIN COURT.

September 25, 1918:

We arose at 5:30, but I had been awake for an hour listening to the thuds of artillery. I have since learned that it was a German barrage. It is said that the Germans on this front are expecting an attack and are showing considerable nervousness. It occurs to me that they work it off in a nasty way. But I also discover that their lack of poise is justified as the First American Army is to attack from the Argonne to the Meuse at Day-break tomorrow morning.

The 2nd Battalion got into position at LES ALLIEUX FME. before daybreak yesterday morning but Col. Morse was much excited this morning to find that B and C were going into position by daylight. However, they were stopped and will go in tonight in time to open up in the Big Barrage.

It appears that we are playing an elaborate jest on the Boche. They are supposed to think that the lines are thinly held by French and that there are no Americans in this sector. In order to go up to the front line

trenches or forward observation posts, one is required to disguise oneself as a poilu. If Fritz is falling for this he is even more stupid than I believe him to be. We have been up to the Headquarters of the 91st Division, whom we now appear to be supporting. Later the Colonel and I went back to BRABANT where Supply Company was situated and then still farther back to find Headquarters Company and the dear Band. The whole outfit was discovered lurking in the woods many kilometers to the rear. They claimed they had walked across France to get that far, but the Colonel intimated that it would suit him to have them get under way again at once.

After leaving them, the Colonel went back to Division Headquarters and I returned to BRABANT to get Captain Dissing and reconnoiter a place for the trains. By the time we got back to the fields above AUBREVILLE, south of Hill 290, it was pretty dark. The Captain and I stumbled around in the dark trying to find the place designated by the Divisional Traffic Officer but every trail seemed to lead to ammunition dumps, which are poor company when the enemy is shelling. Finally we decided on an open field and leaving Capt. Dissing to meet Supply Co., I went back to bring up the Telephone and Radio Details. I reached Brabant about eleven, after worrying our way along in pitch darkness, over roads packed with troops, mostly artillery and ammunition trains.

We decided to start back at 2:00 A. M. After getting something to eat, I spent the remaining time in getting things organized, and at about 2:00 we got under way.

September 26, 1918:

Everything passed off very pleasantly until we got on the road between PAROIS and AUBREVILLE, where we ran into the tail of a column of the 323rd. I halted my column and rode ahead until I met a lieutenant of the 323rd. He said they were halted by guards because the road ahead was being heavily shelled. Finally the column ahead began to move. Leaving an interval of about a hundred meters, we followed. Suddenly, I seemed to be enveloped in a sheet of flame, my horse reared and almost fell, and then everything went black. My first thought was that a shell had exploded right beside me, but when I collected my wits a little I found that I had ridden almost under the muzzle of a railroad gun on a track beside the road. I felt a bit sheepish. By the time we got to the field where the trains were it was daylight. For several hours the American barrage had been on its way and the effect had been magnificent. The reverberation was continuous and the flashes of the guns mingled into one great sheet of light reaching high into the skies. Toward daylight it began to die down somewhat as the Infantry gained their objectives and by the time my column parked in the field it was just an ordinary barrage.

As we were sitting about munching a bit of breakfast, a queer droning sound struck our attention and then suddenly "Pang" right over our heads. This was followed by more, and we were forced to the conclusion that Fritz was bursting a bit of shrapnel over us. This was still going on when I started out to meet the Colonel a half hour later, but except for a few slight wounds, the assembled gathering was unharmed.

I had to lead my horse through the field north of Hill 290, for there were 3 Geo. P. Fatheads of 75s talking garrulously there and my steed

despises gunfire. Several times as I went through the woods beyond, guns fired from leafy bowers right beside me, whereat the horse and I would do a handspring together. I found the Colonel in a "rocket proof" dugout at LES ALLIBUX FME, so I selected one nearby. Later I was joined by Purdy, Parker and Wales.

By afternoon it was decided to move everything up, so I went to the various organizations with messages. Fritz was still doing a little intermittent shelling, but only one came anywhere near me. That one hit in the road about a hundred meters ahead and I couldn't help wondering if it had a brother on the way. By eight o'clock I was ready to head in to my bunk, having been on the go continuously for nearly 40 hours.

September 27, 1920:

I overslept a bit, but the Colonel decided not to have me shot at sunrise as it was much too late. As the Infantry is now beyond our range, the Colonel expects to move forward at a moment's notice. Therefore, everything is to be in march order at all times. The other officers are occupying the remaining dugouts in the row by a process of infiltration. A number of them are preferring to pitch their shelter tents on the edge of the woods, although Heinie is still dropping a few over this way from the direction of the Argonne.

I walked up to Hill 290 this afternoon and coaxed the faithful Dodge down over the hill to the edge of the field near the dugouts. Staton certainly has my animal when it comes to any ticklish driving.

There does not seem to be any immediate prospect of moving so I am spreading my bedroll for the night. Cautious George, however, is not going to take any wild chances, so his roll stays on the fourgon and he will borrow Capt. Dissing's coat to sleep on.

September 28, 1918:

The Colonel desired a Regimental O. P. from which we can peer at our front lines which are now well up beyond MONTEAUCON. Also I am supposed to start functioning as an A. I. O. Therefore, Brooks and I went out this morning, first to the Cigarette Butt (Cigalerie Butte) then over to the site of the village of VAUQUOIS. This village is shown on the map as situated on the top of a considerable hill, N. W. of the Cig. Butte. No doubt it was somebody's home town a few years ago. Now, not only is the village wiped out, but a series of mine craters 50 to 60 feet deep have removed even the ground it stood on. The hill is most interesting, for on one (the south) side is an elaborate French trench system and on the other is a still more elaborate German system. In fact the Germans have made a regular cantonment inside the hill. Complete street systems, one with a narrow gauge railway on it, had been made within the hill, sleeping quarters, mess halls, dispensairs, officers' apartments, storerooms, in short, everything pertaining to army life is there and the whole is lighted by electricity from a complete power plant inside. From the number of hand grenade posts on the edge of each side of the mine craters, the Squareheads and the Poilus must have had a ripping time shying "potato mashers" at each other across the chasm.

I have picked out and consolidated a pretty fair O. P. in the German trenches near the top of the hill. I used some of the dear Band for

the work of consolidation so of course I worked about twice as hard as they did.

Capt. Webber nearly froze to death last night so he is going to take a chance with his bedroll tonight. I left mine all spread out this morning so it is ready to get into.

September 29, 1918:

McConnaughey turned up last night from liaison duty with the Infantry. He refused to hold sweet converse with anyone as he said he had been under fire for three days and nights and had hardly slept a wink. But he slept until after lunch today and then consented to go over to Brigade H. Q. to report to the General. I took him over in the Dodge to VERIERE EN HESSE to which place Brigade has just moved. By the time we were able to get away from there it was pitch dark and we had to creep along. After traveling some distance it dawned on me that we were on the wrong road. There being nothing else possible we kept on and finally came to an M. P. He didn't know how we could get back to LES ALLIEUX FME. but he did know where the road we were on led. This proved to be RECICOURT, so we went around that way, through PAROIS and AUBREVILLE, getting home about eleven.

Cautious George has his bedroll again tonight but I understand he has his striker put it on the wagon each day.

September 30, 1920:

My only excitement today was hunting the M. O. R. S. #107 (Mobile Ordnance Repair Service). I finally tracked it to its lair in BRABANT and was much entertained to find Gerald May, disguised as a 1st Lieutenant, running the thing. I only succeeded in getting a part of what we needed, so of course this evening Capt. Rutty called up to demand an explanation as to why I had given MacThompson a fuze setter and had not given him one. I finally pacified him and went to bed.

October 1, 1918:

I have decided to fix up the dugout a bit as we seem to be here for the duration of the war. This kept me amused all morning and in the afternoon I proudly guided the Colonel to his O. P. I was a little chagrined to find the Observing Detail huddled in the trench outside of the elaborate shelter I had constructed. The reason given was that the shelter was "too drafty". Practically the only things of military importance which can be seen from our O. P. now are burning towns and aeroplanes. I have spent the evening compiling an elaborate "Guide for Artillery Information Observers".

October 2, 1918:

I celebrated this morning, by taking an all-over bath in my folding rubber tub. This, being my first since leaving PARIS, made me feel like a million dollars. Moreover, the immense labor entailed in taking a bath in this environment used up most of the morning, and I have spent a pleasant afternoon visiting my friends in order to boast of my achievement. I have succeeded in making everyone envious and have had many offers to borrow the tub.

We are beginning to wonder when we shall move as we are now practically in the S. O. S. as regards the relative position of the front.

October 3, 1918: Up to late this afternoon the day has been without incident.

While I was taking afternoon tea in front of Wales' and Lawson's tents - a pleasant custom borrowed from our Insular Allies - the news came that we were to be ready to move at 5:00 o'clock. We promptly scattered and before long all my worldly possessions were once more on wheels. The order from Brigade to move out did not come and 5:00 o'clock found us waiting at the church. By 5:30 it was decided to unharness. Captain Webber in a moment of recklessness, had his bedding roll carried to his dugout. Conversely I became cautious and left mine on the fourgon. About an hour later the order came to move, so I set forth in my new and interesting of pathfinder. It was not bad as there was a portion of moon to light the way. I would go ahead in the Dodge and then wait until the head of the column came up to a cross road or a fork and then I would go on to the next. Finally I came to the place where part of the 324th was to take the road. We were to follow the 324th in the parade, as T. Q. is now commanding the Brigade, while General Fleming straightens the 55th Brigade out. But the 324th had not cleared that point and a bit of reconnaissance disclosed the fact that they probably wouldn't do so for some time. For with only a dozen square miles of ground to choose from, they had parked their guns and wagons in a swamp. Then they loaded up the wagons with ammunition and were trying to pull out of the swamp. Therefore, I went back and waited for the 322nd column, which finally came up about 10 o'clock and halted. At 2:00 A. M. we were able to continue the march. Having been delayed about 4 hours, the Regiment was still on the road at daybreak. I was up in NIXEVILLE watching the tail of the 324th column leave that charming village, for my job had been roughly indicated as keeping contact with the 324th F. A. Heavy. Of course, we were playing our usual game of "Where do we go from here?" It seems to be a popular game to start out and go, without having the most remote idea of where you're supposed to end up. Unfortunately the 324th was headed for a different place from where we were supposed to go. Therefore, when I started back from NIXEVILLE to the VERDUN Highway, I had the pleasure of noting that the 322nd had not turned up toward NIXEVILLE. I Dodged up the column to where the Colonel, at its head, had already turned off the Highway to the right, in the general direction of SOUILLY. I persuaded them to turn down toward NIXEVILLE only to discover that we were to go in the opposite direction to CAMP GAILLIENI. So after interviewing "Spike", who told me if we didn't get in camp before the mists lifted, we would be shelled, we clambered up the hill again and proceeded into camp. This is known as "Rest Camp", which proves that the French have a keep sense of humor. It consists of a number of delapidated shacks, some sheds for horses, and a sea of mud. But it is in the woods and is therefore slightly more restful than being in the open under direct observation, altho I fancy the Germans have a much clearer conception of its exact location than most of us have. In fact as I was toasting bread over a little fire in front of my shack at noon today, Fritz dumped one down a short distance away and a fragment as large as a soup-plate sailed past my ear and landed with a crash against the side of the shack. However, we did our best to get comfortably settled for several days "rest" with the usual result that orders arrived to get ready to move at 8:00 P. M. This meant another night without sleep so the popularity

of the army life was probably never at a lower ebb. At 10:00 o'clock the Colonel sent me to find T. Q. and ascertain, if possible, what day he meant us to be ready to move at 8:00. AS I had no idea where he was and it was dark as a pocket, I set forth with Staton in the Dodge in a fairly skeptical frame of mind. However, I did at last find where he had been and learned that the 324th was well on its way to VERDUN. When I got back to the 322nd I found the 2nd Battalion in the road and learned that march orders had come for them only. The Colonel elects to have me wait and go with the 1st Battalion when they move. This suits me all right for I have not closed my eyes for 43 hours and all last night was spent in staring into the darkness ahead in the effort to miss vehicles and not to miss road turnings.

October 5, 1918:

We learned this morning that the 2nd Battalion went into position behind the hill just across the river north of MARRE. The first Battalion has received orders to go into position behind the hill north of CUMIERES, so the Colonel, Capt. Noyes and I went forward in the Dodge to reconnoitre. The newspapers speak of places retaken by the French as "Liberated villages", regardless of the condition in which the Germans have left them. CUMIERES is the most thoroughly liberated village I have seen, with the exception of VAQUOIS. There is not one stone standing on top of another and one has to slow down to keep from going through it without realizing it. We picked out the battery positions and explored a row of excellent dugouts, finally getting pretty good ones for the Colonel, Noyes, myself and Parker with his Telephone Detail. The largest dugout in the row is known as "P. C. Alexandre". The Colonel is sleeping in an upper berth with me under him. As the batteries were not expected in until some time after midnight, the Colonel decided to get a little "ah" and instructed me to stay up and oversee the moving in of the batteries. The head of the column eased in about 2:00 A. M. and it was after 4:00 by the time the guns were in position, the ammunition dumped from the caissons, and the combat trains on their way back to MARRE, I NEED SLEEP.

October 6, 1918:

While we sojourned at LES ALLIEUX FME. we were under the impression that we had reverted to the 32nd Division. When we left there we thought we were going to join the 79th Division. Now we learn that we have come here to help the 29th open up the drive on the East of the MEUSE. I heard a chap speak one time of "shock artillery" and I thought he was trying to be funny. Now I'm jiggered if I don't think we're it. The attack is to open up day after tomorrow morning. We support the 115th Infantry, who jump off near SAMOGNEUX, so I have reconnoitred an O. P. on the hill above us which commands a splendid view of the ground across the river on which the attack will be developed.

I found a nice red-haired captain up in an adjoining O. P. He was getting ready to do a little sniping with his battery of 75s, some five kilometers behind us. His target was a church steeple in CONSENVOYE which, he claimed, harboured a TEUTON M. G. Crew. I couldn't stay to see the dirty work, however. As I was easing away a novel sound - "Whee - e - e - Zing" - repeated several times. This proved to be machine gun bullets striking the ground at my feet, but whether they came from a Boche plane soaring overhead, or were on their return trip after missing it, I could not tell. Either way they are liable to bore one considerably. Later on I took the Colonel up for a view and the same thing happened again. I should hate to be nicked by a bullet that wasn't

intended for me. I got to bed tonight at a reasonable hour and I don't know how long I had been sleeping when I suddenly awoke under the impression that I was in the mob scene from Julius Caesar. Human forms were milling round me and jamming up against my bunk. Suddenly a quavering voice came wafting in the entrance, "S-s-say, fellers, can't you move up and let me in?". Just then a voice from the upper berth, "What are all you men doing here?" "My God, it's the Colonel" said someone, and the whole flock fled like sheep, mostly down the passage leading into the M. G. Officer's dugout. The Colonel routed me out to find out what it was all about, and when I got outside I found them huddled in the trench. It was the detail for unloading ammunition and it didn't take long to learn that Fritz was engaged in dropping some on the dump. Moreover, it was a toss-up whether they were more afraid of the shells or the Colonel, but I finally found the Sergeant in charge, told him to keep the men in the end of the trench until the shelling eased up, and then went back to bed.

October 7, 1918:

An order came this morning for me to report to Brigade H. Q., Colonel T. Q. Ashburn, Commanding. I am to act as Brigade A. I. O., since General Fleming took all his staff with him to the 55th Brigade. The Colonel brought me down here in the Dodge and abandoned me to the mercies of the "Heavies". T. Q. promptly asked me what my ideas of my duties were. I started to recite what I remembered of the course at BAR-SUR-AUBE, but he interrupted me to say, "Now I'll tell you what my ideas are. I don't want you to spend your time making a lot of damfool reports. I want you to be prepared to do anything I tell you to". I should like to have said, "What you want is an orderly, but I merely said, "Very well, Sir", and slunk away. I have spent the rest of the day trying to keep out of sight.

October 8, 1918:

The push started this morning. Nobody seemed to have anything for me to do, so I went up to the old fort, FORT DE VACHERAUVILLE, where I found "Spike", and together we stood on the parapet and watched the attack through our glasses. "Spike" told me the reason he had been relieved of the command of the 323rd was because he had left all his ammunition at LES ALLIEUX FME. and hiked with empty caissons to save his horses. It is true, the horses came here in good condition, but it is also true that even the wonderful 75 isn't much, without ammunition.

The attack seems to be developing well. Already the columns of prisoners are trudging by on their way to the rear. A few shells have been coming over on the plain below us, apparently trying to search out the R. R. guns on the tracks at the foot of the hill. Several Boche planes have been sailing around most of the time, some directing the artillery fire, others strafing some observation balloons in the neighborhood of CHARNY. Our planes seem to have pressing engagements elsewhere.

This afternoon I was given my first job, which was to go to the Headquarters of the 17th Corps (French) at REGRET and get orders for more ammunition. I went in a motorcycle side-car with a driver who is probably the Barney-Oldfield of the American Army. At REGRET I found the Corps Ordnance Officer, who proved to be a dapper French 2nd Lieutenant. When I went in I had no visible insignia to distinguish me as an officer and he waved me away petulantly,

telling me to wait out in the hall. Somewhat stunned, I found myself outside before I realized the reason. Then I opened up my coat to let him see my insignia and re-entered, whereupon I got a slightly more cordial reception. The trip back was made in the dark, and was exiting to say the least.

October 9, 1918.

This morning I was sent out in the side car to deliver some orders to Major Baldwin's Battalion (323rd) which had moved forward into "Death Valley" south of HAUMONT. When I got there the valley was filled with a heavy mist and I groped until I finally found the battalion up a little draw on the south side of the valley. Shells were falling a hundred meters or so in front of the guns positions and Major Baldwin ventured the opinion that when the fog burned off he would be under direct observation from the East and his battalion would probably be wiped off the map. This seemed rather a gloomy prospect, so I offered to show him where he was supposed to have gone into position. We wandered around the valley until the mist finally did burn off, but when I left somewhat later the Baldwin Battalion was still on the map, altho they had suffered some casualties due to stray shells. When I got back to Brigade Headquarters, the General, who returned last night, had taken over the command and he had a job for me. This was to go back to the entrance to Death Valley and meet three separate ammunition trains which were on the road somewhere in that part of France. Some of this was to go to the Baldwin Battalion, some to the Hopkins Battalion (322nd), which was to move into Death Valley that afternoon, and some was to be dumped for the other battalions of the 322nd and 323rd to pick up tomorrow. Also I had some orders to rush to Major Baldwin. I was to take the General's open Cadillac, but when I found it was out, I asked for further instructions and the Adjutant told me to take the General's Cadillac limousine. This was my first false step.

I got to Death Valley at 3:30 and telling the driver to put the General's pet car well off to the side of the road, I went up to deliver the orders. Then I went on up to Colonel Hopkins Battalion and arranged for ammunition details to be on all night and got a detail for a cossack post to be on all night at the entrance to the valley. This was so that none of the ammunition trucks would slip by when I had to be up the valley.

Soon after dark the trucks began dribbling in, and from then on until three in the morning I chased up and down the valley, sorting out lot numbers, showing trucks where to dump, directing operations when Quad trucks slid off the road and blocked the traffic, and wrangling with Frenchmen who came crashing down the narrow road at frequent intervals with empty M. G. Ammunition carts, stretchers with wounded, ration carts, even reliefs going into the trenches or coming out. Our dear Allies invariably blocked the traffic and unfortunately it made no impression on them that I was representing the General. Therefore all my authority had to be conveyed by my truculent, overbearing manner and I think many must have gone away with the dazed impression that I was General Pershing. It was pretty nearly the last straw when Long John Stewart, a 2nd Lieutenant in the 324th took the wrong road and came blundering up the valley with a combat train just as I was clearing a string of trucks from the Hopkins Battalion position. Just then one of my

trusty guards came panting up to say that another flock of trucks had entered the valley. I decided the time had come for unity of command, so cloaking myself in the authority of the General, I took charge of all traffic in the valley and began issuing orders recklessly to Captains of the Ammunition Train, Frenchmen whose names I never found out, in short, to everyone I happened to see. When the smoke cleared away, I expected to find my hair turned white, but we had good luck in one particular. All the evening Fritz had been dropping 77's at regular intervals at the junction of the valley road and the main road but by having my guards time the shots I got everything in and out without a single casualty. Conversely, I had a piece of bad luck for during one of my trips up the valley, a wagon slid off the side of the main road, and of course, had to pick the spot where the General's dear car was parked. The result was a somewhat crumpled fender. I finished the job a little after 3:00 in the morning, and got back to Brigade H. Q. at a little after 4:00. I knew I'd have to report to the General in an hour or so, and decided to take a nap in the car.

October 10, 1918.

I reported to the General at 5:30 this morning, and finished by telling him about the fender. He looked a bit peeved and an hour or so later came charging up to me with fire in his eye. Bending on me all the authority of a B. G., Am. E. F., he said "Well, Mr. Briggs, I have been talking to my chauffeur, and he says you made him put the car in a very dangerous place after he told you that the General would never put the car on a narrow road, but would leave it back somewhere and walk". At first I was too astonished to say anything, and when he said, as though talking to a naughty child, "What have you to say for yourself?". I answered "Nothing whatever, Sir". He turned to something else and I stood at attention for fifteen or twenty minutes cogitating on the futility of working like a stevedore while a chauffeur slept in the car and let his fender get smashed and then having his lying statement condemn me out of hand. For when I got out of the car I asked him if he thought the car would be safe there or had he better take it back into SAMOGNEUX. His answer was that since it was a wide road and he could get well off it, he thought it was better where it was. Moreover, he had disobeyed me, for I had told him to watch the car. Finally, the General turned his attention to me again, and said, in a somewhat milder tone "You may report back to your regiment. Mr. Briggs. I wish to thank you for the fine work you did for me last night, but I deplore the fact that I couldn't send my car out in charge of an officer without having it come back all smashed up". Saluting, I withdrew, and gathered up my belongings. As it was out of the question to ask for any of the General's means of transportation, I started to walk the ten kilometers to Death Valley. - And then they wonder why we reserve officers don't want to stay in the Service in peace time. We just naturally can't get the idea that fenders are more important than getting ammunition to firing batteries.

When I got to the top of the hill north of VACHERAUVILLE, I saw a clever bit of Boche air work. Two American observation balloons were up close by, one to my right, the other to the left. Suddenly a Boche plane came tearing toward us from the German lines. He headed for the balloon to the left which started to descend, but before I could get down to safety the Boche was over it. His machine gun began to spit incendiary bullets and the

observer tumbled out of the basket with his parachute. Before he reached the ground the "saucisse" burst into flames, and came down a roaring mass of fire works. The Boche had banked and started as if to fly back to his lines. When he had gone a little way, he banked again and headed for the second balloon which started to go down. But this one also was too late and shared the fate of its "buddy". During the whole performance, an Allied plane was sailing around majestically a kilometer away.

When I got to the end of the bridge at SAMOGNEUX the 1st Battalion, 322nd, was just coming over with the Colonel at its head. They kept on up to the hill above BRABANT but the Echelon was established in the field near the junction of the main road and the road up Death Valley, just north of SAMOGNEUX. I lunched sparingly (for good and sufficient reasons) at the Headquarters Co. kitchen and later on walked up to the ridge on the north of the Valley, my ultimate destination being 2nd (Hopkins) Battalion Headquarters, or P. C., as we have now learned to call the spot where the officer Commanding unit happens to light for a space of time. As I proceeded, I watched the big boys (210s or 240s) landing in the "liberated village" of HAUMONT, on the top of the hill above the 2nd Battalion guns. It was here I got my first realization of the vagaries of the high explosive shell, for in a little square in the middle of the village, three horses were tethered. Three "G. I. Cans" landed in succession, apparently within a few meters of les chevaux. As each shell burst, enveloping everything around it in dense black smoke, I thought, "Goodbye, nags". But when it cleared away, there they were, shaking themselves a bit impatiently, but apparently unharmed. On the other hand, when the third one broke, a fragment came squealing toward me and landed a few meters from me, four or five hundred meters from the point of impact. Then came the worst example of the uncertainties of shell fire. Just as I clambered down the hillside above Colonel Hopkins' dugout a big shell landed in No. 1 gun position of E. Battery. Before the smoke had cleared away "Doc" Butts was on the job with his men, carrying out the fragments of what a few seconds before had been a gun crew. Two of the crew had to be collected in blankets in order to bury them, a third died as he lay on the stretcher waiting for the ambulance, and the other two were still living when the ambulance took them away. But Butts says it is doubtful if they pull through. A little later the Colonel arrived on the scene and visited the other gun crews. He asked the men on the gun next to the one hit, if they were all right, and their answer was, "They've got to get a lot closer than that to make us stop firing this gun, Sir".

When I reported to the Colonel, he welcomed me back most cordially in spite of my telling him that I was in disgrace with the General, in fact the Colonel said he was glad I'd smashed the fender as otherwise I might have been kept there. Its just like getting home to come to the Regiment.

My baggage I learned, was in Purdy's Radio fourgon, so I hunted him up and found his and Parker's outfits back by the canal. Parker invited me to share his Telephone Central dugout in the canal and as I had no transportation for my bedroll I took him up. A few shells are coming over toward a battery on the edge of the canal and my bunk has a total width of not over 18 inches, but the roof looks strong and I am tired enough to sleep on a 4 x 4.

MALBROUCK

October 11, 1918:

I was awakened this morning by a telephone call directing Parker and me to report to the Colonel at once. When we got there the Colonel told McConnaughey and me to go up to the trenches on MALBROUCK and pick him out a good dugout for a P. C. Parker was to go along and fix up the telephone connections. It appears that an order had come from up above that artillery commanders should keep close to the commanders of the infantry they were supporting. In other words, Colonels now act as liaison officers, so at this rate, 1st Lieutenants will soon be serving as runners.

We are now supporting the 116th Infantry, Colonel Kelly commanding. His P. C. is in a "rocket proof" near the road from BRABANT to the MOLEVILLE FME. At this point there is a system of German trenches which we captured in the action of the 8th of October. Naturally, everything is filthy and there is quite a bit of wreckage about, also a few fairly dead Boches. Most of the dugouts are of the "deep" variety, but Colonel Kelly's is just under the surface and I should hate to see even a lively 77 land on it. Last, but not least, all the entrances are, of course, toward the German lines.

After an exhaustive search, we found a fairly decent dugout about a hundred meters south (or back of) Colonel Kelly's. It is undeniably a "deep one", and a stairway would even make a snake do some figuring, but the only other dugout that is as large is smashed up a bit and the Boche lying in the doorway has been kept too long. McC. stayed with Colonel Kelly when I went back to escort mon Colonel to his new home. It is quite a hike to the top of MALBROUCK so I persuaded the Colonel to ride around via BRABANT. Therefore, at about dusk we set out, taking McDaniel with us to bring back the horses. With the usual luck which appears to follow the Colonel around, no shells came anywhere near us altho there was some desultory shelling of the woods north of MALBROUCK. As we rode along the ridge from BRABANT to MALBROUCK, the Colonel made the apt remark that he had never felt larger or more conspicuous in his life. Our way led between the batteries of the Fibish Battalion of the 323rd, and just as we got beside one of the guns, it fired. I happened to know that it was there, but the Colonel did not, and so gave a lifelike imitation of my surprise when this happened to me near PAROIS on Sept. 26th. McC. met us a little later and escorted the Colonel to his new P. C. but shortly after, the Colonel decided to spend the night in Colonel Kelly's P. C. McC. stayed there also. I took a look inside and never have I seen so many human beings packed into such a small space. It seems probable that a number will have sleep standing up, for the lack of floor space on which to lie down. I am fixed up with a bunk in the Dungeon, as we have christened the "deep one". Purdy, Parker and Noyes are also there. McDaniel, of course, is bunking with us, and a place is being reserved for the Colonel. Parker's telephone crew is in a room at the top of the stairs and Purdy's valuable radio personnel is in another "deep one" a little further down the trench. I have a feeling that its going to take a mighty big G. I. can to blow us out there.

October 12, 1918:

This has been a fairly quiet day. Owing to the fact that the kitchen is away down at the bend of the road below the trenches, it proved impractical to have meals brought to the dugout. Therefore, I went down and

and sat by the kitchen, thus making sure of a hot meal. This is all right now, as they only dropped a few shells near us, but the way the doughboys roam around on the parapets of the trenches together with the smoke rising from the kitchen, is certainly going to draw fire sooner or later. I trust my sixth sense will tell me when they are "on the way". Even now they are ranging on P. C. Kelly. They dropped a few around our part of the trenches this evening and of course we had a gas alarm. They didn't sound like gas shells to me. My bunk is made of chicken wire and my bedding consists of two blankets and my trench coat, so I expect to look like a waffle when I get up in the morning.

October 13, 1918:

Another uneventful day. While I was eating dinner down by the kitchen, a couple of 77's sailed over us and landed up in the trenches. I have since learned that one of them killed a lieutenant in the 323rd.

This afternoon we set up a pretty good stove in the end of our dugout. This enabled us to have a hot supper. Moreover, by some strange chance, we were issued a can of cinnamon, so we had hot cinnamon toast. Lastly, a runner came up with some letters and several of them being from home, the day was quite a success. However, the Colonel decided to have me spend the night in P. C. Kelly, with him (and about twenty other officers) and the result is I have been able to doze a bit while sitting wedged in a corner of the dugout but did not get my beauty sleep until about 4:00 A.M. when one of the Infantry officers offered me his floor space between the Colonel and another Infantry officer. Altho the three of us had to lie practically wrapped in each other's arms, none seemed very wakeful.

October 14, 1918:

I did not go to the kitchen for dinner today, for the single reason that Fritz bounced one off the kitchen last night and its business is temporarily suspended. Incidentally the Teuton has begun to resent the activity around P. C. Kelly and has shown his displeasure by bombarding us at odd moments. Probably this is also another manifestation of the proverbial "nervousness" which he always shows prior to one of our attacks. We are going to make one tomorrow morning and I daresay, he knew it before we did - he usually does. Furthermore, in addition to his attempt to pot us with his artillery, he sent over five planes this afternoon, who amused themselves by flying over our trenches and machine gunning every one who didn't take cover. Colonel Kelly immediately called up some headquarters to ask for air protection, but unfortunately our aviators were taking tea and therefore couldn't come. However, we were promised an aerial display at half past two next week. It is an odd sensation to be chased about by something in the air above you, and I begin to feel the utmost sympathy for a chicken pursued by a chicken hawk.

The Colonel has moved back to the dungeon for the night. Johnny Morrison has come in from the front lines where he has been lying out ahead of the BOIS de la GRANDE MONTAGNE. It must have been quite exciting, and I should imagine, fairly dangerous as the whole place up ahead is alive with German machine guns. Tomorrow he is to be on liaison with the assault battalion of the 116th.

While we were sitting around tonight the German and the Black face comedians (French C.A.C.) on our right started to mix it up, so we all dashed out to take a look. The whole ridge running east from BOIS d'Ormont was lighted up with star shells for of course as soon as the first shell landed in the French lines, they began to send up "one star V.B.'s", which means "our own artillery shooting into our lines". Of course the French artillery is so used to this procedure that they merely laugh and lay down the normal barrage, so everybody is satisfied. However, tonight the attack seemed to be a fairly strenuous one, for the pyrotechnics continued until the infantry apparently used up their supply. Whereupon the whole thing ended as quickly as it began. During the whole performance John and I sat on the parapet and talked things over. He is having an attack of indigestion, which possibly accounts for a bit of depression he is fighting off. He is a dear boy and I am mighty fond of him. I wonder if the girl he loves so greatly, realizes how lucky she is. A little later as we were sitting around waiting for orders to come in covering our part in the attack, the telephone rang, and the following message came over the line from the echelon - "A shell just landed in the Dodge where Captain Webber, Plunien and Staton were sitting. Staton has a leg blown off and we can't find any trace of Webber or Plunien". For some moments nobody spoke and then somebody said "The first report is always the worst." This gave us a little comfort and incidentally proved to be true, for a little later the phone rang again and we learned that Webber and Plunien had been blown out of the car. But except for a slight cut on Plunien's wrist, both were unharmed. However, Staton's foot is gone, a member of the band, and one of the sanitary detail were killed, and dead horses were strewn all over the landscape. A little before midnight, the orders came and shortly afterwards I turned in.

October 15, 1918:

The attack started at 7:00 this morning. Colonel Kelly moved up into the BOIS de CONSENVOYE ahead and we started to move into the dugout he vacated. Shortly after this the Colonel decided he ought to go up and see Colonel Kelly. I noted with interest that the road leading up through the woods is simply alive with bursting shells, but if a Colonel could go up through there a lieutenant certainly could, so off we started. Oddly enough we made the whole distance up to the new P. C. Kelly without a single shell landing in the road, altho they were landing quite close in the woods on each side. Moreover, just after we had gone down into the dugout the Boche artiller decided to strafe a bit and for a while they were bouncing off the roof in great shape. Pretty soon reports began to come in about the progress of the attack and among the first came word that John Morrison had been killed by M. G. fire. The Colonel and I were very much cut up over this news.

In a little while the Infantry began calling for concentration fires to blast out M. G. nests and from then on until late in the evening we were very busy planning "shoots" and getting the data back to our batteries. McC. and Colonel Kelly came in about dark after having been caught under the Boche barrage and forced to spend a number of hours in a little dugout on the edge of the MOLLEVILLE FME. clearing, a few hundred meters up ahead. It was up to me to spend the night at the telephone, so after we figured out a protective barrage for the night, the Colonel and McC. turned in, and I made myself comfortable as possible at the phone. We have a man named Craft, one of Parker's

linemen, staying here to shoot trouble from this end. He has been out several times already when the line has been broken by shells and by complete disregard of danger has succeeded in keeping us in communication with Capt. Noyes back on MALBROUCK. This is essential on account of the Infantry calling for barrages.

Nearly every one has gone to sleep in spite of the shell fire which now and again rocks our dugout. It is funny how one is always subconsciously waiting for the G. I. can that is big enough to penetrate and blow your dugout off the map. But at least it lends enough excitement to the game to help one to keep awake when there is no one to talk to. I have been thinking a lot of John - it seems so rotten to have him lying out there in the mud all night.

It is getting near daybreak and the sleepers, who are packed like sardines in every available space in the dugout, are beginning to uncoil themselves.

October 16, 1918:

The attack was continued this morning, chiefly to improve our positions. The BULTRY BOIS has proved a tough nut to crack owing to M. G. fire from the N. W. slope of the BOIS D'ETRAYE. We have raked it a couple of times, but it was not until we combed the slope of the BOIS D'ETRAYE up past the PYLON, that our Infantry was able to take the BULTRY BOIS. It is now "Nobody's Land". Our casualties are pretty bad and we appear to have run into about the hottest corner of the American Front. This dugout is apparently a favorite target for we are bombarded with the greatest regularity. They have made a number of direct hits on it, but so far it has proved invulnerable. Unfortunately, it is impossible to set up a kitchen under this constant bombardment, so we eat jam sandwiches three times a day. When I get through with this I know I shall never be able to look one in the face again.

We have been pretty busy today planning shoots to help out the Infantry. Colonel Kelly is most enthusiastic about the support we are giving him, which is most gratifying as he is the first Infantryman I have met yet who will say a good word for the Artillery. The usual cry is that all the artillery ever does is stir up the Boche artillery and shoot short, thus giving our Infantry a double dose. Of course, this isn't true, but it's hard to convince an Infantryman. I still seem to have my horseshoe with me, for one time when I was out today a 77 hit within a few meters of me. As I heard the thud I mentally braced myself for the sensation of a few pounds of steel entering my frame, but nothing happened, and I certainly blessed the defect that had made that shell a "dud". Fortunately for our side quite a percentage of the German shells seem to be "duds" these days.

Among the prisoners brought in this afternoon was a German Oberleutnant. He spoke English pretty well, so they brought him into the dugout to be quizzed. He was a tall skinny individual with large shell rim spectacles, but in spite of a ring of his enemies around him, he never lost his arrogant bearing. Another prisoner proved to be a machine gunner. We were somewhat astounded that he had been taken alive, but interrogation disclosed the fact that he was coming up with his machine gun for the first time when he was captured. A live machine gunner is quite a curiosity.

The latter part of the evening some more prisoners came in, too late to pass them back to the rear. So one of our soldiers was detailed to guard them and they all huddled in the lee of the dugout. A little later the bombardment started up again, and a shell, hitting at the entrance to the dugout, killed the guard. The next moment, the prisoners, six in all, came tumbling down the stairs, bleating like sheep. One of them tried to crawl under the Colonel's bunk which was about 12 inches above the floor. Unfortunately for Fritz the space was already occupied by a Yank, and a free-for-all immediately ensued, during which the Colonel was almost bounced out of bed. Thereupon the Boches were rounded up, and vehemently protesting, were herded onto the stairway where they passed the remainder of the night. It being McC's turn to man the telephone, I crawled into the bunk beside an Infantry Officer where I slept like a log until 5:00 o'clock.

October 17, 1918:

About the middle of the morning it became apparent that the front was more or less stabilized, so the Colonel decided that we should go back to our P. C. on MALBROUCK. Altho Fritz had been shelling the road pretty continuously all morning, our luck held again and we made the trip back without a shell falling anywhere near us. When we got near MALBROUCK we ran into the General and his staff reconnoitering a position for the two battalions that are back in Death Valley. When he left in time to miss the noon-day bombardment we went on to our dugout and shortly afterward were greeted by the familiar sound of shells bursting outside. Owing to this our kitchen was unable to function, and to my horror we had to make another meal of jam sandwiches. It is fortunate that I am ravenously hungry all the time or I should not be able to eat another one of the frightful things. This afternoon I spent much time attempting to talk to Capt. Bush, the Brigade A.I.O. The connections were very bad and several times the line was shot out in the middle of a conversation. I made a written report of my doings the last two days, wrote a couple of letters, and went to bed early.

Oct. 18, 1918: I have not done very much today except show Colonel Hopkins around the area chosen for his battalion by the General. I finally persuaded him not to put it on the edge of BOIS DE CONSENVOYE, on the grounds that the Boche was pretty well registered on that line. To illustrate my point Fritz did some high, wide and fancy shooting on this line while we were reconnoitering. This afternoon Bush called up and made an appointment to meet at a cross roads up the line tomorrow morning to go out hunting O. P's. I could tell him now that observation is not possible from where our present front line lies, but at least the search should be interesting.

For some reason Fritz appears to feel that by getting us he can win the war for he has wasted more ammunition on our dugout today than Bertha can make in a week. My "desk" is at the foot of the air shaft and every time I get started working on my plan directeur, a shell bursts at the mouth of the shaft and down comes a miniature avalanche of dirt and stones and I have to start cleaning up. It is most annoying and makes me bless the doughboys who make us conspicuous by doing their sight-seeing from the top of the parapet. It would certainly be awkward if the Boche should decide to blast us out with some of his larger stuff. As it is, our corrugated iron roof seems to shed the 77's all right and I am getting so used to them that when a lull comes during the night, I wake with the feeling that something is wrong.

Orders have come returning the Hopkins and Baldwin Battalions to their rightful owners, so as soon as Colonel Hopkins moves up to his new position, mon Colonel will have his entire regiment assembled under his command once more.

October 19, 1918:

This has been a fairly large day for me. When I got to the trysting place designated by Bush, no one was there, but presently Verrill of the 323rd hove into sight. As we stood chatting, a Boche plane appeared directly overhead and let fall some silver stars. This is an ingenious method they have evolved of designating targets for their artillery. As I could not flatter myself that they recognized me, I decided that he was indicating the cross roads as a target. Accordingly, I suggested to Verrill that we ease down the road a bit in the direction from which Bush would come. 'Twas a happy thought for presently Fritz began to pepper the cross roads, got his adjustment and quit just about the time Brush and Lewis of the 324th came up. We sat down by the roadside to hear the worst and my expectations were exceeded. It appeared that the General had put his pencil on the map at a couple of points and told Bush that he should establish O.P.'s there. I gently intimated that those points were out in front of our lines, possibly within the German lines. Bush said it couldn't be helped, we'd have to go out and reconnoitre them. So, much amused, I started forward in his wake. We had a fine time playing Indian across the MOLLEVILLE FME. clearing, for we had to traverse an open space of about 200 meters under direct observation of the German machine guns in the BOIS D'ETRAYE. Therefore we went across singly, at intervals of about 200 meters on the theory that the Germans would not open up on a single man. I found myself watching the BOIS D'ETRAYE with rapt attention, possibly under the impression that I would see M. G. bullets coming in time to duck them. When we got to the cross roads at the N. W. corner of the MOLLEVILLE FME. Bush insisted on sitting on a log barricade in the middle of the cross roads in order to plan our reconnaissance. Pretty soon my sixth sense began working overtime and I suggested that we were in one of Fritz's favorite targets. So we adjourned, Verrill and I going North and Bush and Lewis going East. After walking a few hundred meters we came to a bend in the road. As we were about to ease around it a voice from the bushes said "I wouldn't go 'round that corner if you don't want to get plugged". Further inquiry elicited the information that Fritz had a machine gun trained on that point and had already bumped off several Yanks who didn't know the rules. Furthermore, we learned that at that moment we were on our outpost line and were headed toward the German lines, altho the General's map showed our front line several hundred meters ahead. However, this didn't mean much for most of the time the Infantry have very little idea where they are on the map. So we took to the woods and crept out to the point at the bend, took a good look, identified the visible terrain on our map, and then went over and had a chat with one of our outposts. a M. G. crew. They told us that there was a German M. G. crew about 75 meters in front of them, so I was glad we had stopped when we did. Then we scouted back along our front line until we came to the highest ground and then headed for the trysting place. When we got near the cross roads I was much interested to note that the barricade we had been sitting on was largely missing and in the middle of the road were three dead Yanks.

I began to feel considerable respect for my sixth sense.

Bush and Lewis soon turned up, and the former said he had found a fine place in the BULTRY BOIS from which he could see the town of ETRAYE and the road leading into it. It looked to me as if the spot indicated on the map was in front of our lines, but he said he'd been there, so I said nothing. As we went toward home, Bush suddenly decided to explore a little hill to the S. E. of the MOLLEVILLE FME. This took us over a path I had not seen before and I was much surprised to find a number of Americans still unburied. In one dugout which had been used for a First Aid Station, I saw six men all ticketed to be evacuated to the rear, but a shell had landed in the door of the dugout and killed them all. A little later we ran across about twenty laid out in a neat row on the side of the road, apparently waiting until the end of the war to be buried. I should hate to think that I am to become a landmark if I get knocked off.

It was now getting to be nearly 11:30, and I told Bush we could soon expect the noonday bombardment of P.C's. But as we were pacing the P. C. of the 115th Infantry, Bush saw a machine gun nest in a tree nearby. Of course he had to climb up to see what he could see and just as he reached the top - "Zip, Bam, Zip - Bam" and the noonday one was on. They began coming in pretty thick on all sides, so as soon as Bush reached the ground we headed for the 115th P. C. After a while the first frenzy was over and we decided to make a break for home. We ran into a kitchen at the south edge of the woods and ate some chow, then Bush went back to Brigade and I headed in to our P. C. But I was not destined to enjoy my rest, for a little later the telephone rang and I learned that the General wanted an O. P. established at once in the place "discovered" by Bush. The Colonel chose George Bacon to occupy the post in order that he might conduct fire on the road into ETRAYE. Also Parker was instructed to go along to plan telephone communication from George to the batteries. When they came in to find where the place was, it seemed so hopeless to show them on the map, when I hadn't seen the exact spot myself, that I volunteered to conduct them to the place Bush had indicated to me. This was unfortunate or I should have missed one of the really entertaining incidents of my sojourn on the front. When we finally reached the vicinity of the place where Bush claimed he had been that morning it occurred to me that we should do some of the single-file, Indian stuff. Therefore, I went first, followed by George at about 20 meters, then Parker at the same distance behind George. As we had not yet come to the spot Bush had shown on the map, I was easing along fairly rapidly, taking care, however, to keep a certain amount of foliage between me and the slope of the BOIS D'ETRAYE. As I neared the place, I was peering out into the valley trying to get a view of the road and thus it happened that I was just stepping out from behind a bush when I lowered my eyes to the immediate foreground. About 30 meters from me was a machine gun. My first thought was that it was one of our outposts, of which I had up to now seen none. In fact I had been somewhat impressed by the fact that we had seen no Americans for quite some time. Then it dawned upon me that I was gazing upon Boche helmets and field gray and I promptly eased back behind the bush. It appeared that they had not seen me so I turned and crept back to George. When I told him that there was a Boche outpost just a little beyond the bush, he wouldn't believe me, so I had to escort him down to the bush to see for himself.

He was amenable to reason, so we then withdrew behind a little bank to hold a council of war. From a sporting point of view it would be interesting to try to capture them. From a tactical point of view our position was weak. We had no idea how far away our troops were nor how many Boche outposts there were in the immediate vicinity. Also if we had to do any shooting it would precipitate a riot all along that part of our front. Finally, with the feeling of an opportunity missed, we decided to "fight another day" and started for home. When we got back about 200 meters we ran into a bunch of enlisted men under a lieutenant whom I promptly asked where our front line might be found. He responded that he was just on his way to establish the front line and it soon came out that up to then about 300 meters of our front was "wide open". Through this opening I had confidently walked. So I told the lieutenant I could tell him where the German front was, which seemed to interest him mightily, and we started back toward my favorite bush with the lieutenant following at a respectful distance and his men trailing along behind. I took him far enough to show him the location of the outpost, which seemed to satisfy him completely, for he immediately decided to establish his line behind the bank and I went back and joined George and Paul, and we started home. I stopped in to tell the Infantry Battalion Commander about his front line and he said he was much interested to know that there was an M. G. there. I said "So was I", at which he seemed mightily amused. While we were talking to him Fritz started to shell the P. C. but we contrived to dodge down the track and got home without further incident, altho my eyes and nose and throat are a bit gassed from squatting under gas drenched bushes to hide from the Boche flyers which have been patrolling our front lines all afternoon. The Colonel asked me why I hadn't brought the Boches in, but I replied that I was perfectly delighted to have brought myself in safely without being bothered with a lot of Boches.

October 20, 1918:

Bush called up to say that the General says that a non-commist go out to where we were yesterday, and as soon as the Infantry make it possible, must establish an O. P. with telephone communication. I asked if he wanted me to go and he said it was not necessary, but knowing the situation, I decided I'd better go anyway. It proved to be a very entertaining trip for we crawled out to the line of outposts and then crawled from one to another until we had visited three. In the last, near where we were yesterday, we could hear them in the German outpost on the other side of the bank. Then we scouted around until we found a tree from which we could get a good view of the road into ETRAYE. I found Corporal Woodrow a good running mate for he seemed to enjoy playing Indian as much as I.

After lunch the General telephoned that he was coming up to the P. C. to see the Colonel. About an hour later the phone rang - General to speak to the Colonel. A few minutes later the Colonel said that the General wanted us to come down to McKinley P. C. The change of plan was somewhat sudden, but when we got outside we found that Fritz was dropping them around us with a careless disregard for rank. Having arrived at McKinley P. C., the Colonel descended into the depths while Bacon and I stayed outside talking to Cooper. Fritz was indulging in a little harrassing fire on the road beside the P. C. and once or twice we had to duck. Finally the Colonel and the General came out and just then a G. I. can landed just across the road.

The General started to "dig in", then, "Funny thing, Warfield, that's the first time I ever ducked". Be that as it may, I feel that I owe my longevity to judicious ducking when the fragments start to fly. Then the General interviewed Bacon as to his impressions of O. P.'s in BULTRY BOIS, and he finally decided that for the present we would make no attempt to establish any in front of our outposts. However, I am to go on trying to find an O. P. for A.I.S. work. After this the General offered to take us down toward SAMOGNEUX as the Colonel wants to find the 57th Infantry Brigade and the P. C. of the C. O. of the 114th Infantry, whom we are going to support in the next smash. When we got down to the 324th the General let us out. The 324th, owing to their high angle fire, are ambushed behind the hills beside the BRABANT-SAMOGNEUX road. The Divisional camouflage officer has been doing some marvellous work on the gun positions, but camouflage means very little in the life of an Infantry man, for a regiment of Infantry has camped all over the place and are serving rations from the gun pits. The Colonel went into T. Q.'s P.C. to make a call and I stayed outside and chatted with Cliff Wright. A little later we got started again and wandered over the hill down into the valley toward HAUMONT. As we came down the hill we met a Yank who remarked casually, "Look out for those wires", referring to a lot of fine wires running in a different directions. We looked at him inquiringly and he vouchsafed the information that his buddy had just caught his foot in one and was now on his way to the hospital. These Germans are great at mechanical devices. We got up into the town of HAUMONT but could not find any trace of the 57th Brigade H. Q., so we retraced our steps and finally came on it at the entrance of the RAVIN du BOIS des CARES, right across from where the Baldwin Battalion had their position. After a consultation with the B. G., Colonel Pope of the 114th Infantry took us back to his P. C., north of HAUMONT, where we had supper. McC was there with his liaison agents, Barger and Murphy, and these two later guided us up to the valley past Death Valley (Ravin de BOISSIERES) and into our favorite trenches on MALBROUCK. Soon afterwards we were once more in our P.C., where we were welcomed home by Capt. Noyes, who is beginning to have a sort of prison pallor superinduced by excessive life underground.

October 21, 1918:

This morning Woodrow and I went out on a final search for an O. P. We wandered all around the BOIS BRABANT sur MEUSE and finally gave up the futile quest and came back. We have now established an O. P. right outside the door of the P.C. and have started in counting the shells that fall in the BOIS de CONSENVOYE, the RAVIN DE COASSINVAUX, the RAVIN D'HAUMONT, Death Valley, and last but not least, at our own front door.

After lunch the Colonel and I set out for the echelon, which is now south of SAMOGNEUX. By the time we arrived there it was drizzling gently but firmly and I was pleased to find my two suitcases sitting out in a mud puddle slowly decomposing into their original elements. The Colonel relieved my feelings by giving Findley a good dressing gown, and the suitcases were put under cover. The whole place is a sea of mud - a most depressing sight. I couldn't find a dry place to open my bed-roll from which I wanted to get some underwear, so I finally unrolled it in the mud. This enabled me to discover that a shell fragment as large as a flatiron had gone completely through my rubber mattress, but as long as I wasn't on it at the time it isn't so bad. The Colonel cleaned up all the jam in sight and shortly after dark we started back in the faithful Dodge, which seems to have recovered from its mix-up with

the shell. We got out at the top of the hill above BRABANT and walked the rest of the way to the dugout.

October 22, 1918:

The day started in auspiciously but warmed up as it progressed. We are to attack again tomorrow morning and as usual Fritz seems to know it as well as I do. Therefore he is peppering us with ardor worthy of a better cause. I have had quite a bit of work to do today on my records, as I have just received an order to report to Artillery Headquarters of the First Army. The Colonel says I do not have to leave until after the attack tomorrow, and how I hate to go at all. I cannot even wake up any enthusiasm about getting away from the shell fire, altho it has certainly been hot. Our telephone lines have been cut just outside the dugout a number of times today and the dirt has been rattling down the air shaft at frequent intervals. The climax came about dark. - Suddenly a shell landed right at the door way and the concussion put out our candles. Before I could make a move to light them, the next shell came inside to burst. In a moment the place was filled with H.E. gas and everyone was coughing and choking and issuing orders. About five people yelled "light the lights", and I decided they must mean me, so I found a couple of candles and lit them. I tried on my new "T-so" gas mask but I couldn't see that it impeded the gas any. Likewise I opened up the air shaft which had been closed for the night. The door was all blocked with debris, so the Colonel said "See if you can get out the air shaft". Before I could make a move, Noyes went up it like a snake and it looked so easy I decided to follow. I had a little difficulty and could not shake the conviction that when I put my head out at the top I would be beamed by a shell. But I finally got out and nothing happened. By the time I got around in front, some of the telephone men had cleared the entrance sufficiently to get out that way, and a couple of them were pretty sick, so I led them up to a side trench. Then I met someone who said he thought the Colonel was still in the dugout, so Sergeant Winters and I started down. I began to choke, so I stayed at the bottom of the stairs and Winters went on into the room beyond, but the Colonel was not there. So I went out and started back toward Purdy's "Deep One" and met the Colonel coming toward the P.C. I persuaded him that the gas was still pretty thick in the dugout, so he went back to Purdy's and I returned to the P.C. and found the gas somewhat dispelled. The telephone men were working on the lines which had all been shot out and I went down and lighted up and started to clean up a bit. The place looked like a gambling den that had been raided, but by the time the Colonel arrived I had everything fairly shipshape. The Colonel was feeling pretty "rocky" so I persuaded him to turn in. Noyes didn't need any persuasion for after ascertaining that the place was free from gas he had unostentatiously climbed into an upper berth and was already dreaming of Marinette, Wis. I sat up and tended the phone until 4:00 A.M. when the Colonel opened one eye and suggested that I take a nap.

October 23, 1918:

We were up again at 5:30. The barrage started with a roar at 6:30 and at 7:00 the Infantry went over. We did not get any reports until about eleven but then we learned that things were going fairly well. The old Yankee Division (the 26th) is attacking on our right, which is more satisfactory than our previous situation when the French coons decided to sit tight, and left our right exposed. The French counter batteries must have another

date for the German heavies are certainly pounding the daylight out of our 2nd Battalion, which is just in front of our P.C., and a battalion of the 323rd, which is just to our left. We are getting a lot of the "overs" or else Fritz has a few to spare for us. Every now and then the dugout rocks and every time I have gone outside they've landed one too close for comfort. This afternoon about three o'clock the Colonel decided that our rocket proof P.C. was not conducive to longevity, so he is now back in Purdy's "Deep One". The shells came in so frequent that the cuisine has been unable to operate and the midday meal was dispensed with. At a little after 3:00 I gather up my belongings and said good-bye to the Colonel, Parker, Purdy and the rest, and set out on foot in the direction of Brigade Headquarters to get my orders for Army Headquarters. I was fairly well accoutred as I had on my "Kapok Nevasink", my blankets in a roll on my back, my pistol, canteen, musette, field glasses and gas mask hung on various parts of my frame. As I climbed out of the trenches a shell burst a short distance away and I started to flatten out as the fragments whizzed by. But I realized that if I hit the dirt my overdressed condition would probably preclude my getting up again, so altho several more hit near enough for the fragments to come uncomfortably close I decided that doging was out of the question. Fortunately they all missed me and when I got down to McKinley P.C. I was overjoyed to find the Dodge sitting there. It proved to be waiting for the Chaplain who was up burying some men who had been bumped off in the Second Battalion this morning, so I got in it and started to wait. About 200 meters to our left the 150's were landing regularly in a small area about 300 meters from the nearest guns of the 1st Battalion. Apparently the Teuton was under the impression that he was strafing the 1st Battalion and it was most enjoyable to watch him waste ammunition. At five o'clock Chappie had not turned up, so I went into McKinley P.C. and called up the Colonel to see if I could borrow the car. He said I could borrow anything he had, so I picked up Colonel Hopkins and Colonel McKinley, who wanted to go back to a meeting at Brigade Headquarters and away we went. When I arrived at Brigade Headquarters I persuaded Bacon to give me a few jam sandwiches and some coffee, as by this time I was an acheing void. Then I got my orders and went on to the Supply Company at CHARNY, where Captain Dissing welcomed me and gave me a place to turn in.